

**West Virginia Legislature
AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**FINAL REPORT
to
Joint Committee on Government and Finance
2012 - 2013 Interims**

Members

Senate

**Senator Ron Miller, Chair
Senator Robert Beach
Senator Karen Facemyer
Senator Walt Helmick
Senator Bob Williams
Senator Joseph Minard**

House

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Del. David Walker, Vice Chair
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Delegate Allen Evans
Delegate Nancy Guthrie
Delegate Lynwood Ireland
Delegate Carol Miller
Delegate Brady Paxton
Delegate Dave Pethtel
Delegate Randy Swartzmiller
Delegate Joe Talbott
Delegate Larry Williams
Delegate Daniel Hall**

The Agriculture and Agribusiness Committee met each month during the 2012-2013 period beginning in May 2012 to discuss and study agriculture and agribusiness issues. The topics assigned to the committee by the Joint Committee on Government and Finance were as follows:

1. HCR 127 Unwanted & stray animal population reduction
2. Discussion of nontraditional agriculture (not deer farming)
3. Senior vouchers for locally grown food
4. Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
5. SCR 37 Voluntary crop growing standards
 Spay/neuter laws and funding options

MAY 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Monday, May 15, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. Janet Fisher, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture, presented the proposed new Department of Agriculture lab at the Tech Park. The renovations of the space at the Tech Park will cost the Department of Agriculture \$8 million. Other staff of the Department of Agriculture Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division who spoke on the new lab were Brenda Keavey, Lab Manager and Assistant Director of the Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division; Amie Minor, Infectious Research Scientist, Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division; Dr. Jewell Plumley, State Veterinarian and Assistant Director of the Animal Health Division. Delegate Williams moved the Committee send a letter to Governor Earl Ray Tomblin in support of an \$8 million appropriation to the Department of Agriculture to pay for renovations to the Tech Park space to allow the Department to move their labs to this new space.

Noelle Starek, Committee Counsel, discussed legislation from last session the Committee may want to review during Interims, including captive cervid legislation, spay/neuter programs, general livestock and trespass laws and exemption on taxes on utility task vehicles (UTVs) for farmers. Other topics to discuss include funding for community garden programs, chicken litter issue, bee population, voluntary crop growing standards, creation of a "West Virginia Grown" brand and nutrient management. Tours of nutrient management sites, agri-tourism ventures and promotion of agriculture at the State Fair were also discussed.

Delegate Beach requested that the Department of Agriculture provide a summary of the divisions of the Department and state and federal funding sources for each division.

JUNE 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Tuesday, June 26, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. Gus Douglass, Commissioner of Agriculture, spoke on behalf of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. Robert K. Edson, DVM, PhD, Vice President of Operations of Aviagen Turkeys, Inc., discussed the concerns of using chicken litter in the proximity of primary breeder turkey facilities. Other staff of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture to speak on a draft legislative rule pertaining to poultry litter movement into primary poultry breeder rearing areas were Deputy Commissioner, Janet Fisher, followed by Poultry and Environmental Specialist, Jerry Ours, Assistant Commissioner, Steve Miller, and State Veterinarian Dr. Jewell Plumley.

JULY 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Monday, July 23, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. Dr. John Tomlinson, Veterinarian, and Remington "Rem" Perkins, Certified Organic Dairy Farmer, discussed the scientific and economic benefits of using poultry litter as fertilizer for farming in Greenbrier and Monroe Counties, in particular for organic farming. Steve Miller, Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture, spoke on behalf of the changes to the proposed legislative rule regarding poultry litter and manure movement into primary poultry breeder rearing areas. The rule has been filed by the WV Department of Agriculture as an emergency rule. Denny Doddrell, beef and hay producer and employee at Aviagen Turkeys, Inc., discussed the proposed legislative rule regarding poultry litter and manure movement into primary poultry breeder rearing areas.

AUGUST 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Monday, August 13, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. Paul Poling, State Apiarist, WV Department of Agriculture, discussed various issues regarding field activities of the department regarding the number of bee colonies and the consequences of using pesticides on the bee population. Gabe Blatt, Cabell-Wayne Beekeepers Association spoke on behalf of the beekeepers in the state regarding various issues of concern to the beekeepers.

Delegate Guthrie moved to ask the West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner to send a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency regarding management practices of the use of pesticides.

SEPTEMBER 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Monday, September 10, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. Daniel J. Robison, Dean and Director, WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, discussed plans and issues regarding the school. Theresa Bruner, Executive Director, Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia, discussed statistics and data dealing with the spay/neuter program. Mary Ann McDonald, Member, Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia and Randolph County Humane Society, discussed financial burdens to West Virginia and other states dealing with the spay/neuter program. Betty Burkett, President, Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia, discussed possible solutions for issues dealing with the spay/neuter program. Sylvia Shafer, Associate Director, Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia, discussed the spay/neuter program. Senator Helmick suggested the committee invite county commissioners and mayors to address the Committee regarding the spay/neuter issue at a future date. Bob Tabb, Deputy Commissioner, West Virginia Department of Agriculture discussed issues dealing with

the spay/neuter program with regard to how the Department of Agriculture may be of assistance.

Chairman Butcher reminded the committee of the upcoming tour to observe the poultry facilities in Moorefield, West Virginia on September 16-19, 2012.

TOUR OF MOOREFIELD POULTRY FACILITIES SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met in Moorefield, West Virginia for a visitation of the area poultry facilities. On September 16, 2012, the committee met at Brighton Park for a Chicken BBC Dinner with area poultry businessmen. On September 17, the committee toured the Pilgrim's Prepared Foods Plant, the Pilgrim's Feedmill, the WVDA Poultry Diagnostic Lab and the Pilgrims Fresh Plant. On September 18, the committee toured the Pilgrim's Hatchery and the Walker Poultry Farm in Fort Seybert, West Virginia.

OCTOBER 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Monday, October 8, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. Jerry Ours, Poultry and Environmental Specialist, West Virginia Department of Agriculture, presented an update of the Committee's visitation to the Pilgrim's Pride Poultry Facilities in Moorefield, West Virginia. Dr. Jewel Plumley, State Veterinarian, Department of Agriculture, discussed the Committee's visitation to the state's poultry diagnostic lab. Theresa Bruner, Executive Director, Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia, discussed followup information from the September 10, 2012 meeting regarding spay/neuter programs in other states. Dr. Wayne Dunn, Wood County Commissioner, and Mary Ann Hollis, Executive Director of the Parkersburg Humane Society, proposed companion animal tax legislation and to speak from the county perspective on the spay/neuter issues.

NOVEMBER 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. Steve Miller, Assistant Commissioner, West Virginia Department of Agriculture, discussed Aquaculture Advisory Board Recommendations. Ken Semmens, Extension Specialist - Aquaculture, West Virginia University, answered questions regarding costs related to raising and selling fish. Frank and Nancy Tuckwiller, Watts Roost Vineyard, Lewisburg, West Virginia, discussed request for new legislation regarding farm wines. Chairman Butcher requested council compare West Virginia legislation with other states with regard to farm wines and vineyards.

DECEMBER 2012

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Tuesday, December 11, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. Angela Vance, AARP, spoke about senior vouchers and senior hunger. Tom McConnell, Farm to Schools Program Leader, WVU Extension Small Farms Center and Bekki Leigh, Program Coordinator, WV Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition, discussed developments in the Farm to School Program. Bob Tabb, Deputy Commissioner, WV Department of Agriculture discuss the Farm to School Program.

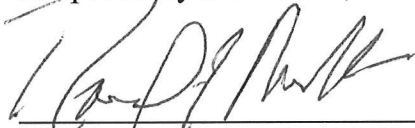
JANUARY 2013

The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee met on Monday, January 7, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. Daniel C. Eades, Extension Specialist, Rural Economist, Community Design, WVU Community, Economic & Workforce Development (CEWD), presented the results of the West Virginia Food System studies. Savanna Lyons, Program Director, West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, presented the results of the West Virginia Food System studies. Tootie Jones from the Monroe Farm Market discussed the importance of co-ops and why the current co-op law needs to be revised. Committee attorney, Noelle Starek discussed proposed legislation relating to fencing and livestock laws.

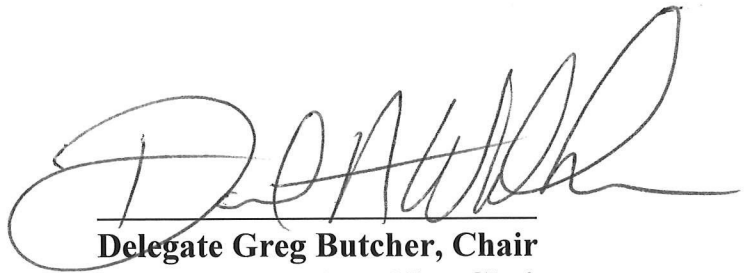
The Agriculture and Agri-business Committee **REPORTS** as follows:

Your Committee **RECOMMENDS** that it continue to receive updates related to the Agriculture and Agri-business industry.

Respectfully Submitted,



Senator Ronald Miller
Chair



Delegate Greg Butcher, Chair
Del. David Walker, Vice Chair